

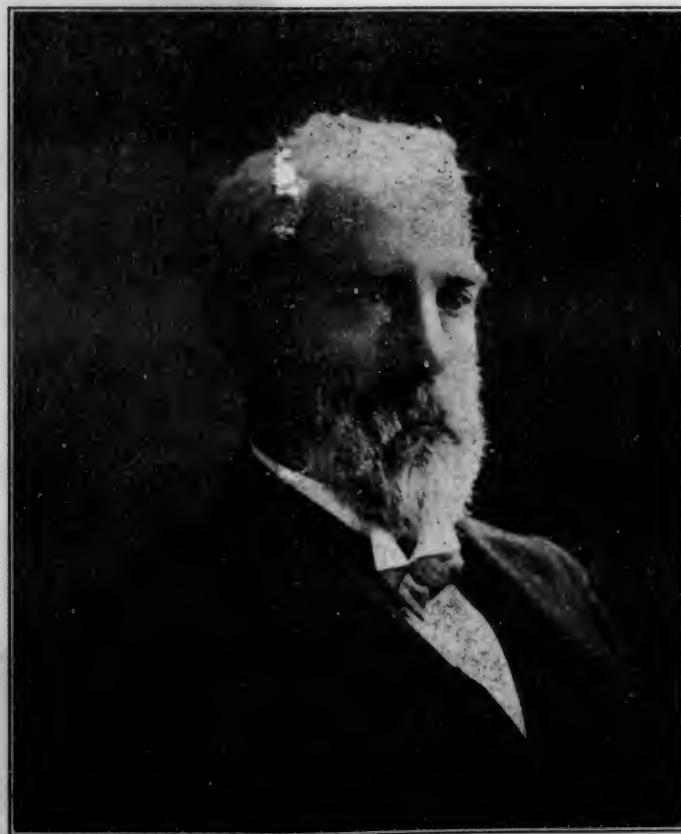
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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



DR. J. C. BARNES.

Valiant Worker in the Cause of Humanity.

DR. J. C. BARNES

(By Harriet M. Closz.)

If the pessimistic pedant thinks the march of modern progress too snail-like in its pace, let him study the serene sincerity, the confident composure of Dr. J. C. Barnes, of Arcola, Illinois, and his hopefulness will increase, for the life and labor of our good friend, the Doctor, fairly radiate the infinite faith he feels that the good in humanity will ultimately triumph, and so persistent is this conviction of the final evolution into a material Utopia that it almost convinces one against his will.

Within the circle of the cosmic experiences of the subject of this sketch, there have marched many changes, the results of which have extended to the uttermost ends of the earth, and tested thoroughly the material, moral and mental fiber of the men and women of America. But while fearlessly assailing war policies and the governmental machinations of political profligates, while courageous in the exposure of constantly recurring corruption, he yet retains his fealty to his fellow men, and while indefatigable in the furtherance of plans for progressive work, he optimistically rests his vision on the far horizon of final enlightenment and liberty for mankind.

If I were to apply the philosophy of sun-worship to this case, I might intimate that the forces of nature had conspired to favor Dr. J. C. Barnes since he was born on the Ohio River, on Sun-day, (Sept. 27, 1835) and a pretty legend might be woven to account for the combined energies of sun light and heat upon the face of the flowing stream, resulting in this phenomenon of infant life, but the days of miraculous births have passed.

I must record that our friend's father was a prosperous farmer, but not literary, while his mother's relatives were intensely interested in public affairs, many of whom held offices in State and Nation. Of his mother, he says:—

"She was as intellectual as any woman I ever knew, and far ahead of her time in politics and religion (a Freethinker). Besides being an inveterate reader, my mother cared for a family of eight boys—of which I am the oldest. She did the spinning, sewing, weaving, washing, cooking and the thousand other things required of housewives at that time."

His early life flowed in much the same channel with other boys, though he casually mentions that he escaped the mania for torturing and killing domestic animals and birds which seems to afflict so many lads today. He says he never owned or used a gun, either for pleasure, profit or political prestige.

In 1854-55 this young man took a course in Scott's Commercial College of Indianapolis, and at that time heard the Governor (Wright) of Indiana read his message to the Legislature. Fifty years after, to a day, while on a visit to the Hoosier Capital, he again heard the Governor's (Hanley's) message. From 1856 to 1860 he clerked in the Hanover Postoffice, at which time he was married to Elizabeth Bower Combs, who was graduated from the first class of the first medical college opened to women in the United States. She practiced medicine from 1857 to 1895, when she was stricken with paralysis, and in 1901 she died.

To the Doctor and Mrs. Barnes were born three sons, and he reminiscently recounts that he was born on Sunday, his wife on Monday, his oldest son on Tuesday, and his twin sons on Wednesday. Having paid the highest tribute to the intellectual capacity of his mother, he duplicates it by declaring that his wife matched her.

In this pleasing account he says: "My wife never talked much, but when she opened her mouth she always said something."

I heartily congratulate Bro. Barnes, for what a relief it must have been to associate intimately with a woman of sense after meeting the butterflies of fashion and the sanctified scandal-

monger of society. Between the lines of this dear friend's letter I can read that home to him was the reconstructing influence which re-cemented the torn and shattered materials of competitive conditions; that the guiding hand of the household was ever ready and helpful and the mother-mind a magnificent manifestation of his ideal hope for all women. The fruition of this union has filled his life with a great gratitude, and the three sons are a crown of triple magnitude more appreciated than a princely income.

In 1882 Dr. Barnes ran for Congress on the Greenback ticket against Uncle Joe Cannon, but of course paid the penalty of defeat for political heresy. Besides he would have failed as a law-giver, for he believes in tolerance, not tyranny, in patience, not passion. He is a philosophical Anarchist, advocating the Single Tax as a step toward the economic emancipation, and naturally has moved with the minority. He says: "All government is tyranny, but the people seem to want and love it. I have always voted for principle, and if my vote should ever be for a successful candidate I would question my own sanity."

Dr. Barnes has written volumes for the press, and the expositions of his ideals and arguments are lucid and unanswerable. In face of the fiction being flaunted from all sides that we are free and that the people rule, he has patiently sought to enlighten the ignorant and strengthen the vision of the short-sighted. In controversy or debate, his words are characterized by simple logic and sound sense, his courtesy is unaffected, and his superb poise and patience arms him with a power that is irresistible.

Speaking of our present political contest, and the fallacy of majorities, he says—

"Take one hundred men, women and children; twenty-one are allowed to vote (one in a family of five). Six vote Republican, five vote Democratic, four vote Populist, three vote Prohibitionist, two vote Socialist, and one does not vote, and without doubt this one man knows more of sociology than all the others, and at best the six govern the hundred people. Of this six, at least three vote as their fathers did, two sell their votes, and one votes intelligently; so we have narrowed it down to one man governing the hundred, and yet we prate of being a self-governing people."

It would be well if the soon-to-be voting sovereigns, as well as the already initiated, would ponder these principles.

Religiously, Brother Barnes has been a life-long liberal—by heredity and training a Freethinker. Perhaps he owes his fuller sweep of vision and greater grasp of conditions to the fact that his infancy was guarded from the blighting effect of the fear and fanaticism of Christianity. He says: "My life has been an uneventful one, and now at 73 the truths I know are very few, for the truths I thought I knew have dwindled to a very narrow margin." But can one's life be uneventful when every moment is a serious seeking for human betterment?

Our friend has striven to eradicate superstition, for he treasures truth as Nature's holiest asset. His life has been consecrated to the constructive process, to the loving forgetfulness of self, to the unflinching fidelity to friends and principles, and his every action has been consistent with such creed.

His desire is a mighty well-spring of willingness, and his purpose the unflinching force which gushes upward, making natural processes to enlarge and the human units to evolve.

Peace has its victories no less than war, and our friend has, for over half a century, waged a constant and heroic warfare, but his battles have not been with ballots or bullets, but with ideas. And he has won—is winning—and will continue to be victorious, for ideas are immortal. Truth and justice can not be vanquished—they are eternal.

Man a Risen, Not a Fallen, Being

From the Doctrine of Man's Depravity
Have Come Many of the Social and
Political Ills that now Afflict
and Curse the Race.

(By Dr. J. C. Barnes)

The greatest error, fraught with the greatest evil to man's progress, to his development morally and intellectually, is the error termed total depravity—the error that man is by nature averse to good or God—that he is prone to do evil.

The error is twin sister to the erroneous idea of the so-called fall of man from primal perfection to the deepest degradation. The doctrine prevailed, that man was so fallen, so depraved, that he was totally depraved and sinful, and could not do good acts until his evil nature was regenerated by a miraculous act of God, through some mysterious process not understood, but taken on faith.

The erroneous doctrine is opposed to the inspiring truth that man is and always has been as good as he knew how to be, and environments permitted him to be, and that he has never fallen, but has continued to evolve and grow wiser and better by experience.

The doctrine of depravity gave rise to and fostered the idea of **deserving** punishment or suffering, not only at the hands of God, but at the hands of men who were

saved or miraculously changed in nature from evil to good.

It was a logical inference, that if the unregenerated, the depraved, **deserved** and received condemnation and banishment from God and punished eternally as the doctrine taught, that temporal punishment of the depraved by the regenerated was proper and right. The doctrine gave rise to, and color and plausible sanction to all kinds of cruelties, and government of the inferior class by the superior. There never was a doctrine that so sanctioned and justified class distinctions as the doctrine of total depravity. The doctrine doubtless originated with the priesthood, who were the ruling, the only educated class.

The doctrine is never preached any more as it was fifty years ago. It is too absurd to get credence. The reverse of depravity is gaining advocates, which is more natural. Total depravity was an invention of the priests. That man is naturally as good as environments and his knowledge permit him to be, is a more natural and reasonable doctrine. As proof of it, reason that—

Happiness is the only good.

All men seek happiness.

Ergo,—all men seek good.

The obvious corollary of the above logical conclusion is, that man is **not bad**, but good. No one desires error. All seek truth.

All man needs to be good, is to know what good is, and how to obtain happiness. He does not need to be unselfish, as tho' his self was depraved, but only an **educated** selfishness. To destroy one's selfishness would destroy his individuality—and no one wants to be **other** than he is. He only needs to know a few natural laws and natural truths. Action and reaction are equal—like begets like—to be happy we must make others happy. We must **give** before we **receive**, are expressions of natural law. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Whatsoever measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The world of mankind is going forward to Nature—not back to it. We are discovering natural laws and truths. It used to be supposed that truths were **made**, and authority was quoted as truth. Now it is known that authority does not prove anything. Truth itself is its own vindicator and needs no elaborate argument to sustain it. Books and speeches of the future will be short, consisting of what people know and can prove. Politicians and preachers can talk a long time about what they know—nothing.

When we tell only what we know or can prove, it won't take us long to tell it.

Arcola, Ill.

Striking a Balance Sheet

Final Review and Outline of the Triumph
of Freethought and Humanity.
Nicene Council. Old and New
Testament Documents. Myths
and Forgeries.

ARTICLE 5.

(By Judge Parish B. Ladd.)

Linnaeus, from his zoological laboratory, in his first order of mammalia, including four genera, places Man at the head.

This primordial Homo is but an aggregation of microscopic, chemical compounds. In the transit of life he represents the living world below him. Devoid of consciousness for many days after birth, a plaything in childhood; fondled in the arms of some lovely maiden in his youth, he enters on the stern duties of life a little later, where his pathway traverses a land of sorrow and sadness, moistened with tears or lighted up with sunny spots here and there, after which he passes to the realm of darkness, from whence no return tickets are issued.

Never is he of more importance in Na-

ture's chemical laboratory than the day-fly which flits for a few hours in the sunbeams when life is ended. As it is with man, so it is with his religions, his kingdoms and empires. Eternal change is imprinted on Nature and all her works. Suns and worlds are born but to die.

This primate, like his progenitor, the anthropoid, was without language; a few guttural sounds to make manifest his wants filled up his vocabulary. Language, like writing, has been of slow growth, evolving only as necessity called for it. Thousands of years separate this primate from man, in a savage state. As such

"He saw into the future as far as a savage can see—

Saw naught but a world of savages to be."

The earth around him was flat; the sun which gave him warmth, comfort and food, was his greatest benefactor; in time it became his "Deus Primus." The moon and stars were made by the sun to light up his nocturnal pathway; they too, were good, but in a lesser degree. The mountains, rivers,

forests and seas were made by the sun-god. The storms, tornadoes, earthquakes, thunder and lightning were alternated, good and bad; he saw his own kind destroyed by them.

Everywhere around him these phenomena and wild beasts came to terrify this wild man of the forests, deserts and valleys. Fear is now his lot; where may he look for help? The sun, moon and stars, with their numerous phenomena, are powerful beings; they can do him harm or good; in his terror he calls on them to protect him; there the first rudiments of a religion have appeared—the result of fear—and on this fear lies the foundation of all the religions in the world. This foundation, through all the centuries of the dead past, has never been shaken; it is the rock on which the world of religions of today rest. Here we have the true source of all the different religions of the world.

Out of this fear was born the belief that the pantheon of divinities could and would, if reverently appealed to, render aid to the

suppliant. Here we have the beginning of a worship of the gods. As long as trembling man believes in the divine intervention of the heavenly powers, so long will the world swarm with devotees.

Could early man have foreseen that Nature is one stupendous whole; that her laws are supreme and unchangeable; that no wish, act or thought of man can, in the slightest degree, modify or change them, the world would never have been cursed with a religion. Thus it will be seen that ignorance of Nature and her laws is the parent of all religions. As most of the human race have ever been, not only ignorant of nature and her laws, but stupidly ignorant of nearly all else, they have at all times been the tools, votaries and dupes of a priesthood.

Source of the Priesthood.

Under different names the world, from the remotest antiquity, has been cursed with a priesthood, which grew up as will now more fully appear, not from any knowledge superior to the herd, but out of the many. The priests possessed an instinctive cunning superior to their fellows. By the use of this faculty they ingratiated themselves into the confidence of the masses, and thereby made them believe they had the ear of the gods, and so could procure special favors for their clients. From this faculty of skill they have at all times succeeded in securing a fine living from their dupes, over whom they have ever been most successful in keeping their clientage in ignorance and their clerical feed-trough full of delicacies.

The priest, in point of ability, has never risen above an intuitionist, a glib speaker, entertaining his flock with emotional appeals to his gods, or god, with whom he seems on the most intimate terms, knowing all their secrets, wants and desires. The less ability a priest has the greater his success, for his clients, like himself, are not capable of reasoning. Once reason gets into one of their heads, out of the church he goes, if not voluntarily, then by ejection.

The Hebrews and Christians, and their Bible.

This brings me to the point where I will treat of the source of the so-called sacred writings of the two sects, their leaders and reputed authors, so far as known.

The Hebrew Bible contains 35 books. The contents of these books began with the return of Ezra and others from the Babylonian captivity, when (444 B. C.) Ezra read to his people at the ruins of Jerusalem, some writings which he brought from Babylon, believed by some of our best scholars to have been a rough sketch or draft of the Pentateuch; possibly the Hexateuch, or as some think, a brief of most of the Old Testament. This work Ezra ascribed to Moses, who according to the

leading Bibliologists, was in Egypt about 1330 B. C., and left there as the leader of the Exodus about 1320. But it is now known that Moses was a myth, a personification of the Egyptian god Bacchus, and that the star of the Exodus is a romance, simple and pure—all a fiction. (See my writings on the origin and language of the Hebrews, and the story of Moses and the Exodus.)

These 35 books of the Old Testament came from oral tradition. In time the Levitical priesthood commenced to reduce this tradition to writing. This writing, from its commencement to its final close, runs over a period of about 1,000 years, during which the writings went through the hands of numerous copyists, editors and others, who dealt a free hand with them, striking out, changing, and engrafting on them their own notions.

When the original work was done, it was one continuous narrative, embracing numerous subjects, but not a name, time or place appeared to show who were its writers. In short, this was the universal practice, not only with the Old Testament, but with the New Testament. When the task of dividing these writings into books became a necessity, a prodigious task was in store for the workers. They did not know what to do or how to do it.

As far as they were able they selected what seemed to them to be matters most homogeneous for each book; but the task was too much for them, as will be seen by the work of the Higher Criticism, which has disembowled the whole fabric until there is no longer a semblance of intestines, stomach or other digestive apparatus in the whole book. They have found the writings of different men all mixed up until the whole appears one unintelligible jargon, wherein the god Jehovah is put on the most intimate terms with the priesthood.

As to the terrible butcheries and slaughter of men, women and children by Jehovah and his chosen priesthood, as reported in the O. T., they lose their sting when we learn that there is no truth in them. The O. T., after the work of a thousand years, was finally finished in the fifth century of our era. It has been asserted by Mr. Renan that the Hebrews commenced to write up their history about the eighth century B. C., but of this we have no sufficient proof. Whatever writings that people had, if any, were destroyed with the City of Jerusalem at the time of second captivity; so the world had no Hebrew writings until the end of the exile, about 444 B. C. Between this time and the so-called Exodus (about 1400 B. C.), we have about a thousand years, which, under the rules of evidence, necessarily destroys the historical character of all Jewish writings, except such as deal with current events.

The so-called Exodus, which different writers have fixed at about 1400 years B.

C., was at least 500 years before the Hebrews, as a people, had any existence. If we give any credence to the Hebrew Bible, and we have no other evidence on the subject, the Hebrews first came into existence by that name after the consolidation of the tribes, ten, more or less, under David and Solomon, about 800 B. C. For some time before that, different tribes of monotheists crossed the Tigris and Euphrates as emigrants for Syria, and with them each brought its tribal name. When David and Solomon (about 800 B. C.) gathered up these monotheistic tribes, only a few out or many such then in Syria, they were then for the first time called Hebrews—a word meaning emigrant, a crosser of the river. These emigrants settled in different parts of Syria, where they mixed with the native tribes, adopting their language and religion. The spoken tongue at the north was Aramaic; at the south it was a mixture between Phoenician and Canaan. Eventually the pure Phoenician dialect was adopted, at least to the extent of the priesthood and the court, when it became known as Hebrew.

Jehovah.

The Hebrews not only adopted the Phoenician language, but the Phoenician god also, when Adonia, the "deus primus" of Phoenicia, became the only god of the Hebrews. As to the proper name of this god, the Levitical priesthood resorted to their usual tactics of securing a special tribal god of their own without incurring the enmity of their people, who had formed a strong attachment for Adonia. To accomplish their purpose the priests resorted to consonantal characters only, which have been rendered by different writers, Jhyh, Jhe, Jao, Yahweh, Jahwe, Lahveh. These were explained to the common people to mean Adonia; but in the end were vowelized to read Jehovah, but not until the fifth century of our era.

As all know, the Bible contains two distinct accounts of the creation—the Elohist and Jehovistic. The former was written by Ezra at Babylon, where the Hebrew god was Elohim; the latter after the return to Jerusalem, when Jhyh (Jehovah) had become the tribal god of the Jews.

A few words here as to the leading characters of the Old Testament, when I turn to a review of Christianity, its writings and heroes.

The purported 35 authors, whose names have been ascribed to those books, were not the writers of those books. While some of the writings in those books may have been the work of some of the purported authors, says the Higher Criticism, the books as made up are spurious. After these writings had been divided up into books, their purported authors were generally se-

(Continued on Page 12.)

Economic Determinism

The Cause of Woman's Social and Political Condition. Reply to Mrs. H. M. Closz on Religion and Woman.

(By I. S. McCrillis.)

Through the courtesy of Mrs. Closz, I have your issue of Sept. 13th, and read with much interest her article, "Oh Christianity, What a Ruin Thou hast Wrought!" and in commenting on same it is not my purpose to defend man-made creeds or superstitions, but merely to plead for fairness. I believe she has overlooked some very vital facts, and has directed her attack against effect rather than cause.

Her comment on the decision of Judge Goings is just, and her analysis of the position of woman in modern society is correct, but the cause is not Christianity or religion. It is a deeper and more far-reaching cause that operates in all civilized society independent of and in spite of Christianity or religion—a cause that not only determines the position of woman, but the form of religion itself, Christianity included.

Religion, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, or more properly, theological creeds, do not as a matter of fact exert nearly so powerful an influence in shaping the course of development of human society as might at first appear. Their influence is always subject to, and directed by this fundamental cause, and their action and reaction on society determined by it.

No matter how pure the ethical ideas of

a Jesus, a Mohammed, a Confucius or a Buddha (and by the way, they are essentially the same because the enunciation of the same universal principles, differing only as the environments of these men influenced their observations) history proves that the ruling class in civilized society was always blended with them a mass of irrelevant theological gabberish, crystalized all into a creed, and used the creed as one of the many means by which the ruling class has maintained its mastery.

The cause in its last analysis is "economic determinism," and existing conditions are the result of the fact that economic evolution operating along given lines has split society into two classes—a master class and a serving class; an owning class and a disinherited class. This division arose with civilization, not with or because of religion or Christianity; by it most men and all women were disinherited and have practically remained so down to the present time, for though the form has been modified from time to time, the essential fact has remained unchanged; it is infinitely more than two thousand years since it arose, for it came with the dawn of civilization and must remain so long as we maintain the existing ideals of property rights.

Let us be fair then, and direct our attack against the common cause, and not at the innocent and much-abused instrument—Christianity or religion.

Des Moines, Iowa.

Christian Tyranny at the Grave

But It So Happened that this Preacher Got What was Coming to Him, and Was Promptly Called Down.

(By A. D. Sturton, Editor Wage Slave.)

The terrific strain of the past political campaign absorbed all my energies at the time and has left me decidedly below par physically and mentally for the present. I was, as you may know, the Socialist candidate for Governor in the State of Michigan.

The election returns are not all in yet, but it does not seem, so far, that my rabid infidelity affected my vote, as some of my Socialist comrades supposed it would, and the indications are at present that the Socialist vote will show a larger percentage of gain in Michigan than in any other State of the Union.

By the way, you may add my name to the list of those who are willing to officiate,

for railroad expenses only, at Free thought funerals.

There are a great many Finnish Socialists in this locality; in fact, the Wage Slave is published in what was, heretofore, an entirely Finnish publishing office. Practically all Finnish Socialists—at least nine in ten—are also uncompromising Atheists, and you will be interested, no doubt, to know something of their funeral usages.

No priest or teacher of religion is called in. The comrades sit in silence for a few moments; then a committee, previously appointed, take up the casket and without ceremony convey it to the house.

Recently, however, there died one of our comrades who was a son to some Christians, who held a mortgage on his home and place of business. The love of Christ at once constrained them to bring pressure to bear on the widow in her affliction to permit of a Christian burial.

Her economic condition did not permit her to resist these demands, and so the preacher was sent for; also the body was conveyed to the church. Meanwhile, the usual story was diligently spread that our comrade in his last hours had recanted and turned Christian.

However, just as soon as the preacher was through at the graveside, the chief editor of our Finnish paper, John Valimaki, stepped forward and branded as a lie the report that the deceased had turned Christian.

He also spoke at considerable length against the Christian religion, and the cruelties and tyrannies it upholds. Valimaki is a powerful speaker in Finnish, and his address at Mainio's grave will long be remembered among the Finns in Hancock, and the results, let us hope, will be far-reaching for human liberty, industrial and mental.

—"The Workingman"—is also a vigorous ally of Freethought propaganda, and is doing an enormous work in turning the Finns from the darkness of Christian superstition to the bright noon-day of Freethought.

As soon as I am somewhat recovered from the exertions of the past campaign, and have caught up with my correspondence, I will write you further.

Hancock, Mich.

FREETHOUGHT FUNERALS

IN THE HOUR OF GREAT NEED.

Following is a list of the names and addresses of liberal speakers who are prepared to conduct funeral services over the remains of deceased Freethinkers.

On account of probable delay it would be advisable to call them by telegram.

Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Ky.

Dr. J. B. Wilson, 206 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Parker H. Sercombe, Editor Tomorrow, 159 East 56th Street, Chicago, Illinois.

John R. Charlesworth, Lexington, Ky.

Marion W. Marley, Bucklin, Kansas.

A. J. Clausen, St. Ansgar, Iowa.

J. C. Hannon, 3575 Wallace St.,

Philadelphia, Pa.

Stanberry Alderman, McConnellsville, O.

H. H. Lane, 292 N. Front St., New Haven, Conn.

"No Beginning"

By William H. Mapie.

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TURE DEMONSTRATED.

The only book of its kind in existence. Neat cloth binding, 183 pages, two striking illustrations, 75 cents, paper binding 35 cents, postpaid.

INGERSOLL BEACON (O.,

78 LA SALLE ST., CHICAGO.

The Widow's Mite of Might

Priesthood Clings to the Notion that in a Holy Cause, Nothing is too Sacred to be Looted.

(By John F. Clarke)

The widow's mite was used as a lever to pry open the pockets of those who were dilatory in responding to appeals for God's needs.

The widow's mite was swallowed up in the collection, and its power of commercial purchase was but its face value, yet there is no way of estimating the vast amount that has been raised by use of the widow's mite in taking up collections and subscriptions for religious enterprises.

Many another widow has felt that if the suppositious widow took the mite that might have put a biscuit into her hungry baby's mouth, she could do no less, and she usually gave more and sacrificed some comfort for herself or her loved ones. Many a tender-hearted man or woman has felt that they could venture a dime or a dollar in the cause that robbed the original widow. The idea conveyed in the widow's mite theory, is that in a holy cause nothing is too sacred to be looted.

Of course, the good deacon who took up that historical and celebrated collection, noticed that the widow put in but a mite, and he also noticed that others put in less in proportion to their means than the widow did. The widow possibly had but a penny, and gave a farthing, while the good deacon owned a 40-acre farm and gave a nickel and his services in "lifting" the collection. The widow forgot her sacrifice in the midst of her other troubles and struggles, but the deacon added his "gift to the Lord" to the price of his next sale of corn, and recouped. The Lord helps those who are in a position to help themselves, and are willing to do so. The widow's mite has grown to a widow's might; and speaking of widow's mights, the most peculiar and potential mights that a widow ever had was under the Jehovah dispensation, when she could go to her brother-in-law, if she had one not otherwise appropriated, and make him marry her. If he refused, she could spit in his face, and he became an object of contempt.

A certain Jew had five elder brothers, who were predisposed to early death. The elder brother, Ikie, married Miss Rebecca Rubenstein, and then gave up the ghost. Rebecca threw herself into the arms of the certain Jew. She died, but in the meantime her sister Hester, married Benjamin, the next elder brother, and he too joined his fathers. Hester fell to the lot of the cer-

tain Jew. Then Hester died, but in the duration, Miriam Rubenstein married the next elder brother, and he also died, and bride of the younger Jew, and she was soon gathered to her mothers. Miss Sarah Rubenstein captivated the fourth brother, who was not long in fading away, and the certain Jew took her as a matter of course, but she was evanescent too. The last brother espoused the lovely Deborah Rubenstein, and in turn kicked the bucket, or its equivalent in Hebrew dirgeology; and Deborah went to the tent of the certain Jew. He had now gathered the whole bouquet of Rubenstein roses, and was now cherishing the Last Rose of Summer of the garland. He had Blue-Bearded four-fifths of the quintette, but the last was not a quitter. She had come to see the game out, and remain to the concert. One day the the King of Tyre, or Tire, sent for the husband and said, "It behooveth not a man to marry the whole Damn family. Prythee, why the wherefore of the whichness?" "My liege, my lord, it is useless to withstand the widow's might alone, but backed by the Jewish law, it is irresistible, and if Death would but get busy with this one I now have, I would be willing to espouse a dozen successors." "My dear boy, said the King, "here is a passport; make a bee-line for the next steamer for South Dakota." Deborah built her an image of her fickle lord and spat in his face, and then decorating her person with sack-cloth,

she put ashes upon her disconsolate head, and having no other brother-in-law to fall back on, was desolate indeed. The Lord of Israel, who had been kind to her in two affairs, failed her in her direst need.

This widow's might was at an end. The Devil whispered to her to plait herself a mighty hat and get merry and go gunning for a new husband. After the South Dakota judge had passed upon her case by the absent treatment, she took Satan's advice and—

The merry widow's hat became a widow's mite,

There was a sound of revelry by night,
Caused by merry widow's might.

There was another certain Jew, and he was bereaved with a mighty bereavement, for he had lost his only brother; and he sat himself by the roadside to think in thoughts made bitterly bitter; when his sad reverie was invaded by his dead brother's widow's presence. "Oh! Ikey, vot vill I do now, dot Jakey vas gone und diet?" "Really, Leah, I do not know." "Oh! Ikey, Jakey left ten thousand tollars behint him, ven he vent away." "Well, Leah, I am willing to marry you to-morrow, but I am too sad tonight." Next day they tasted the bitter and the sweet in token of the ups and downs of married life. After the ceremony, Ikey said to Leah, "Didn't you say that Jakey left ten thousand behind him when he died?" "He left more as dot. He left eferydings behint him, as he couldn't take nuddings mit him, ain't it?"

This scene is too affecting and affectionate to prolong, even as a phase of the widow's might.

Greatest Woman Philanthropist

Novel Scheme by a Texas Man, in which Mrs. Henry is Close Second to Helen Gould. Votes Cast for Mrs. Closz.

(By Harriet M. Closz)

I have just received a letter from A. G. Lee, of Denton, Texas, describing a monument he is erecting on the joint track of the M.K. & T. and T.P. Ry., on a site to be viewed by half a million passengers annually.

The memorial is to be of granite in rustic form, and to be dedicated to the greatest living woman philanthropist in the world. Any one wishing to express a preferment for a woman in this field is required to send a dime (to cover cost of erecting monument) together with name of the candidate, to A. G. Lee, Denton, Texas. The contest has just recently opened, and will close Dec. 31st, 1909.

I am informed that the names already voted for are Mrs. Sage, Hetty Green, Ma-

rilla Ricker, Josephine K. Henry, Lillian Harman, Helen Gould and yours truly,—Helen Gould in the lead and our Josephine a close second.

From the range of names and divergence of work and ideas, it is evident that the word Philanthropy is not to be defined in its narrow sense of money-giving. Money may be poured in a flood, as it is during a political campaign, and accomplish nothing except surface results; but to one who has his finger on the pulse of living issues, it is patent that **personal service** is more philanthropic than gifts of money or the return to the people of a charitable pittance which should be theirs by right. The life work of a woman who strives for the justice which makes charity unnecessary is in my estimation the great Philanthropist, and while I appreciate the munificence of women like Helen Gould (for no woman can change conditions), I am sure

that in her position she could do far more from an educational standpoint than she is accomplishing in the palliating method of giving alms, and from the list of names herein I assume that the early voters have reached the same conclusion.

I hereby express my thanks to whom-

soever may have cast a ballot for me, and am sure my co-workers on the list are equally appreciative.

Any information desired in regard to the enterprise will be furnished by the gentleman named herein.

H. M. CLOSZ.

What is Eternity?

Only a Coward will Tremble before the Idea of an Ever Dreamless Sleep.

(By Harold Banning.)

The belief in a future life is grounded on cowardice.

Mankind, dreading the thought of eternal, dreamless sleep, has built up a system of religions promising eternal life after our life here on earth.

Remove the fear of eternal sleep, and Christianity will crumble as the faith of the Greeks has crumbled before it. The man who fears not, believes not; while the coward will cling to his Bible and his church as a drowning man clings to a straw.

The belief in eternity excites only contempt in the strong and fearless mind, which is ready to bow to the law of nature. The one and lonely argument of the Christians is only worthy of contempt. The old question of "How did we get here without a creator?" satisfies only the imbecile who believes that poor, weak man must have a

creator, while his god so great and all-powerful can exist without one.

I shall not try to explain the origin of man. I leave this to the scientist, who can explain it far better than the preacher. But life is a purely chemical wonder, and is so regarded by all scientific men. Consciousness is produced by several chemical elements acting one upon the other, and when these elements become exhausted the light of consciousness flickers and fails, like the lamp when the oil, or the oxygen, or the wick is consumed.

The sensible man must agree with the following passage from Mr. Cady's funeral address over an atheist friend—

"On an occasion like this many will ask what is the estate of the dead? The atheist must answer that death is only dissolution. It is simply a return to a former condition, inorganic and insensate. This is nature's universal law, and we know that the loss of an endless future can not be greater than the loss of a beginningless past."

I am a foreigner and have only lived in the U. S. a few months.

immense factory boarding house. It sets upon a barren sand hill. Surrounding it are forty or more farms of various sizes. Sandford has in the last twelve years bought them all. "The Lord" supplied the funds. The persons who have cast their lot with the society live on and cultivate them. They all work, and the produce is turned into the society depot. It is then distributed to them by the Agent as they need it, or as he thinks they do. I visited the place a few weeks since, and in conversation with the financial agent, found that this system of distribution was called "receiving from the lord." The agent, whose name is Shaw, is a clear, keen-minded man. He said, "We all rely upon the lord—I as well as the rest. If I need clothes the lord supplies me."

I looked at him, and with my eyes riveted upon his, I said very deliberately, but with force, "Mr. Shaw, that means that you have a well regulated business system of collection and distribution, and you call the system the 'lord.'"

He lowered his eyes, and said, "Why yes, we have a system,—of course, we have a system."

Facing a man whom he knew could not be fooled by religious cant and phrases, he did not have the hardihood to stick to the "lord-giving" idea.

There are two turrets to the temple. One is where the women pray; the other where the men pray. For several years there has been in both of these turrets never-ceasing prayer. Some one is there praying day and night, year in and out. Two to four hours is the time that each devotee remains.

I learned from outsiders that every time an attack is made upon the society by other Christians, or by some one desiring to get a relative away from the place, thousands of dollars are sent to Sandford from all over the country by persons seeking the favor of the lord, with whom they believe Sandford is in close communion. He is now in foreign waters, sailing on a ship furnished by the "lord." All supplies for the cruise come from the "lord," and are sent to Sandford by Agent Shaw. Shaw has several clerks and stenographers.

I saw no signs of distress or fear among the few men, women and children that I came across on the grounds. It has been reported that such conditions existed.

There is nothing about the place or people any different than other religious communities, save that the average of intelligence among them is not so high.

Rumford, Me.

"The Holy Ghost and Us"

Magnificent System of Graft Revealed by a Visit to Shiloh Hill.

(By Manly A. Brigham)

Your readers have all heard of "Shiloh," the home place of the society called the "Holy Ghost and Us."

It is located in the town of Durham, Maine, not far from the city of Lewiston.

Rev. Frank Sandford, a native of the section, some years ago hit upon the plan of relying upon the Lord for the good things of life, instead of working for them.

He found fool men and women enough to play the part of the Lord.

He got the news noised about that whatever he desired was sent him by the lord. By some means, the desired things came, and many fairly well-balanced persons took some stock in the fake, and spread the news of the supposed power of Sandford. Soon he began the building of a great temple, and relied wholly upon gifts from the lord with which to finish the edifice. He assumed the title of "Elijah." The temple was built. It looks like an

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ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for, upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

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THE EMERGENCY FUND.

While this fund has been growing but slowly, we are pleased to state that we have now been able to name no less than six beneficiaries thereof. To each of them the Blade has written, stating that they are now being carried on the books without any further cost to them. Under this rule, the Blade is going to these beneficiaries each week and it will thus continue, to the credit, the honor and glory of those who have made the contributions.

Previously acknowledged	- - -	5.50
Dr. J. B. H. Feenstra	- - -	2.00
Samuel Brewer	- - -	2.00
Total		- - \$ 9.50

INFIDELITY AND INTELLIGENCE.

The aptitude with which those professing orthodoxy assert that infidels, as a class, are uneducated and illiterate, while they alone are possessed of intelligence, as intelligence is commonly understood, betrays a narrow conception of the subject, and it is sufficient here to state that the term of infidel was launched against the early Christians with a greater force than Christians now apply it to those who decline an acceptance of their faith. It is also worthy of note that as intelligence increased among the masses of the

people, infidelity grew apace, and it may be said with very truth that intelligence is the one efficient cause of infidelity.

Complaint is made, however, that in the art of composing manuscript, or in the chirography manifested in letter writing, many infidels display a lack of intelligence, indicated by the use of poor grammar, bad spelling, and expressions that are in a measure disconnected. But the same may be said of the majority of Christians, many of whom are even unable to write their own names, and a large number of clergymen would be condemned as ignorant under such a test. This, in itself, is an argument against the application of such a hard and fast rule, for an ability to express one's self in correct English is not conclusive evidence of intelligence, nor does it necessarily imply a capacity to reason or to apply well the reasoning faculties. To properly understand what is being discussed we must first know what is actually meant by intelligence, by those who are admittedly intelligent, and what is meant by the use of the term, infidel.

Intelligence is defined as being "the quality of being intelligent, capacity to know or understand, ability to exercise the higher mental functions, readiness of comprehension, and the like qualities obtained through an exercise of the mind."

Infidelity is thus defined by the Standard Dictionary, of Funk & Wagnalls, New York:—"The state of being an infidel, lack of belief, as in the accepted religion. The word is used loosely as a synonym of atheism, and includes in general all forms of religious unbelief, as agnosticism, skepticism, deism and rationalism."

Applying the above rules to the subject under consideration, it will be seen that a correct use of grammar, a polished rhetoric and a classical chirography, are not essentials in a proper understanding of intelligence. These are but the wretched vehicles by which thoughts are expressed, and after all, it is the thought, not the form of expression, that determines the intellectual status of the individual. A man may be learned in letters, he may have a fair knowledge of Greek roots and Latin verbs, he may have read the Bible through, and even written a treatise or a commentary thereon, and yet not be able to intelligently state the cause of the tides, why the days are longer in summer and the nights in winter, and he would still be regarded as an ignoramus by the world of intelligence.

The one principal and characteristic difference between one intellect and another, consists of their ability to judge evidence correctly. Our direct perceptions of truth are limited. For almost all of our valuable knowledge we depend upon evidence external to itself. John Stuart Mill evidently recognized this to be a fact, for in an inaugural address delivered to the University of St. Andrew as far back as 1867, he said:—

"Facts are the materials of our knowledge, but the mind itself is the instrument; and it is easier to acquire facts than to judge what they prove, and how, through the facts which we know, to get to those which we want to know. The most incessant occupation of the human

intellect throughout life is the ascertainment of truth. We are always needing to know what is actually true about some thing or other."

Real intelligence then is the power to acquire facts and to correctly judge them. It must follow that but few of the orthodox can be classed as intelligent. If they observe facts they must judge them incorrectly, or they care nothing for facts and are content to say, "I believe." They care not whether that which they believe be true or false, the admission of the belief is all-sufficient. From this it will be seen that orthodox assumptions concerning intelligence, and what it implies, are conclusions drawn from an incorrect premise.

One instance will suffice to illustrate the drift of intelligent minds from the church. All must admit that some degree of intelligence is necessary to be admitted to Harvard. Now comes Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, who, relating his religious experiences, says:—

"When I entered Harvard as a student I thought Eve had been constructed literally out of Adam's rib. I don't deny it now, remember. At Harvard I attended the lectures of Agassiz, the great geologist and biologist. He believed in creation and lots of it,—that the world was made and did not grow. Then I fell under the influence of Asa Gray, from whom I took botany. He was an evolutionist. I agreed with him. To-day, however, I am not quite sure that Gray was right. Wiley has his doubts. So I send my money to the Campbellite church, which I love and respect, and ask the ministers to indulgently overlook it if I am absent when they preach."

It will be recalled that Dr. Wiley was a member of the faculty of Purdue University; that he refused to attend morning prayer, rode a bicycle, played ball with the students, and was finally charged with heresy and tried therefor. The Chief of the United States Pure Food Department admitted his guilt, but the Trustees refused to discharge him and he remained at Purdue until he voluntarily resigned. In a recent interview, relating this experience, he said:—

"I admitted that every accusation against me was absolutely true. 'I have attended morning prayer so often,' I told the Trustees, 'that I know it by heart. It is the same old prayer day after day, and has become so common and mechanical that it does me no good.'"

Now let the orthodox make answer whether intelligence is to be found inside or outside the churches.

THE OHIO IDEA OF PROPAGANDA.

Our readers will not fail to be deeply impressed with the views expressed by Miss Lou Lawrence, Secretary of the Buckeye Secular Union, upon methods of Freethought propaganda as this subject is viewed in that State, which fall with great force following the expression of another Ohio contributor almost along similar lines.

There is one great truth which we must all recognize, if we would succeed in the missionary undertaking of advance-

ing Freethought, namely, that if we would make Freethought acceptable to the masses, we must make it interesting. In other words, we must attract the masses, and by attracting them we win them and encourage them to become and remain workers in the cause.

What may be regarded as one of the most potent forces in the decay of theology is the fact that it is dry, uninteresting and out of date, not in keeping with the age. This is altogether aside from the further fact that it teaches so many unbelievable things, and were it not for an additional fact, that the clergy are constantly occupied in devising inner societies of women and men to make of them a sort of light artillery, skirmishing among the people to get recruits by cultivating social features that will interest the masses where the apologetics of the church fail,—only by such a system is the church kept from absolute dissolution, and this is practically its last ditch for defense against the inevitable.

We have previously said that the first essential is an effective organization to work under. Two admirable systems are now offered to the Freethinkers of the United States. We have the Materialist Association, a national organization, and the Buckeye Secular Union, a society that limits its practical operations to the confines of the State of its habitat. Under them local bodies could conveniently be formed. Through the regular workings of these local bodies the cause of Freethought could be brought to the masses in a manner that would not only interest them, but get them interested in its further development. The leaders of these societies should be given a much-needed support and encouragement. Let the "Ohio Idea" prevail, for in the end it is the idea entertained by a vast majority of American Freethinkers.

The meetings of these local bodies need not be large or expensive. Some commodious parlor would serve as a meeting place. Furnish the attendants with flowers, songs, music and literary effort. If you have no practiced speaker present to present our views, some one could read extracts from modern writings which would serve the purpose as well and constitute a good substitute. In this way, Freethought truth could be put forward as against religious dogma, and the day of our great victory would dawn the sooner.

The election is over. May the country now find surcease from sorrow. Freethinkers had little to choose from as between the President-elect and his defeated contestant. Taft played into the hands of the Romanists, and the result of the battle of the ballots indicates that he got a fair proportion, if not all, of their votes. Bryan is possessed of cranky religious notions and might have been a religious tyrant had he succeeded in winning the election. As matters now stand Bryan can devote the rest of his life to religious speech-making at Chataquas, and Taft will carry "my policies" into greater effect.

OUR DOUBLE STANDARD OF MORALS.

Have we a double standard of morals, that is, a single and separate standard for men, and another and different standard for women?

Thinkers will admit that we have, but the masses who suffer from an inertia of thought, will hardly credit such a condition. It is true, none the less.

The double standard of morals, or one standard for man and another, yet vastly different, for women, is one of the foremost social questions now being discussed by the leaders of modern thought. Naturally, a casual observer would be compelled to inquire whether or not society, through habit and custom, or long usage, had established an arbitrary line as between the sexes, but did the inquirer become sufficiently observant of actual fact, every-day incidents in human life, it would not have the appearance of an unsolved problem.

Sociologically considered, romance is not along the corolla of love, but it is the very incense of virtue. So long as that envelops both man and woman they wander far above the crass animalism of the world. Banish it, and you reduce humanity to the level of the beasts of the field. Marius and Cosette may dream away a hundred sensuous summer nights hidden in the boskage, but rob them of the halo of romance, destroy the airy nothingness in which they live and love, and brutal passion alone remains.

Is there difference in the social treatment accorded to those of opposite sex by reason of their similar follies and indulgences? There is, indeed, and this difference is so vast, so widely divergent, that it has found admirable expression and portrayal in a new novel from the pen of J. T. Slade, Jr., the manuscript copy of which is here reviewed, that he has given forceful expression thereto in the title to his forthcoming book by calling it "The Difference." In the title alone this "difference" is postulated, but as one goes through the plot of fancy and fact, imagination is compelled to turn to social happenings within the purview of the reader and this "difference" is readily perceived and understood.

"The Difference" is a story of social life in Lexington, admirably constructed, in which a young man and a young woman constitute the hero and heroine. It is a story of love and pathos, youthful sins and follies committed without thought or probable care for ultimate consequences. It reveals what befell the man and how cynical the world of human society became in its attitude and conduct towards the woman. The romance woven around and about the lives of Philip Holmes and Ethel King can find a facsimile in scores of other young men and maidens, and at last pride, the sheet anchor of human morality, the dynamics of noble deeds, comes to the rescue of the woman and she is able to stand up alone, self-reliant, and victor. When love fails and hope flies, pride still lingers, the savage rear-guard, and dies only in the last ditch.

Taking the social machine apart simply to name its component parts, were much like analyzing an apple that the

school boy may know what he is eating, but in "The Difference" the author has analyzed the individual and contrasted the units out of which the social machine is made, and as no stream can rise higher than its source, this portrayal of individual character with all the faults and frailties, really points to construction, and the machine in operation. To the pure in heart all things are pure, but it is a sad commentary upon human nature that in one instance men and women will view conduct through a rose-tinted glass and enshroud it with Arthurian romance, while another actor or actress in the same drama will be consigned to the tigerish clutch of Venus Pandemus or sunk beneath the brutalizing wand of a Circe.

While the author makes no pretense of solving these problems of modern society, he at least furnishes abundant food for thought upon social reconstruction, wherein society may be purified, redeemed, regenerated. It is indeed a pity that youth's sweet dream of innocence cannot last through life, but it appears as an ordination that there must come a time when the shameful fact is driven home to even the most unwilling heart, that society does make a difference in its judgment as between man and woman.

The story of "The Difference" gives graphic detail of the plots and intrigues of youth. It makes no comment. The timely discovery of this "difference" and the startling revelations that come from the lips of the young girl, Ethel King, in fierce and seathing denunciation of such a system of double morals, is a rebuke upon society in general, but with it all a firm resolve to make no unwilling sacrifice to appease a social scandal.

The closing words of the last chapter contain the key whereby this great social problem may be solved. "Never forget," cries the wounded heart, "there is a difference between man's crime and woman's crime; the world applauds the man, disgraces the woman, and we all take part in the difference." Aye, we all take part, unconsciously, perhaps, but we do. Too often the realization of this "difference" comes too late.

MORE FOSSILS DISCOVERED.

The vast geological changes our old earth has undergone at the hands of old Father Time, has received additional proofs by the unearthing of the fossil remains of a gigantic mammal that once roamed over what is now the Fayoum desert in Egypt.

Prof. Henry F. Osborn, of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, in a recent article published by the Scientific American, describes this fossil as being the remains of an animal that stood six feet in height and was ten feet long. The bones of the skeleton are massive, indicating that the body must have been heavy. The neck was short and could freely be moved up and down, while over the forehead were two massive horns, indicating that the animal could easily toss an enemy. The dental arrangements of the jaws indicated that it was herbivorous

and grazed upon low bushes and hard kinds of herbage.

More interesting, however, than the mere construction of the animal, as discovered by paleontologists, is the further fact from the indelible traces the fossil brings with it, the conclusion is reached that the country in which it was found was not always a desert, but bore a light forest growth, which, however, is now entirely disappeared. In fact, Prof. Osborn ventures the assertion, based upon this remarkable find, that it was "a savannah country, partly open, partly wooded, with about the same temperature as today."

In all this we observe the remarkable achievements wrought by the human mind in ferreting out facts not contained in written history, and from such sources, by an application of human knowledge, determine what existed ages ago, when men were not, and none able to leave a printed or written record behind them.

One such find as this is worth all the hieroglyphs that are being employed by fanciful translations to bolster up a worthless creed.

By the way, we might add that the name given to this defunct specie is "arsinoitherium," and having read Genesis we also observe that no such name appears therein. Strange, is it not, that god had no knowledge of such an animal and failed to get its name in his inspired record?

WE WISH THEM HAPPINESS.

The Blade is pleased to announce the recent marriage of Miss Lula Medora Gibson, one of its best known correspondents, to Mr. W. H. Herren, of Heppner, Oregon. Mr. and Mrs. Herren will make their future home in the far West and the Blade, with all its friends, join in wishing the newly wedded pair an abundance of happiness and success as they journey together through life.

If you wish to take part in the Materialist Association's symposium on "No Future Life," you can send your article to the Blade for publication and your donation to Mrs. Bliven, Box 76, Brooklyn, Conn. Such a symposium should be capable of doing great good by the number of writers taking part therein and its wide distribution over the country.

With the resumption of business throughout the country and our people getting well settled following the terrific political campaign let us hope the Blade will be able to share in the general era of promised prosperity and its subscription list become largely increased, as well as its ledger showing up better on the credit side.

If you need a copy of that admirable pamphlet on Marriage and Divorce, by Mrs. Henry, send her 25 cents at Versailles, Kentucky.

No one can doubt the great value of Judge Parish B. Ladd's articles for distribution; also that of President Otto Wettstein's, but it is the cost that stands in the way. The Blade would like to publish them on its own account, but it has not the means.

Adding to the biographical sketch given of Judge C. B. Waite, in our last issue, the Blade desires to state that he was born in Wayne county, New York, January 29, 1824, being an anniversary of the birth of Thomas Paine. Judge Waite will be 85 years of age on his coming birthday. He went to Chicago in 1846 when that city had less than 5,000 inhabitants.

The list of subscriptions to the bound volume of the Blade is gradually creeping higher and higher. Those wanting a copy are advised to get in on the ground floor before it is too late as only a limited number can be furnished.

Freethinkers are prone to assert that there can be no discord in a smile.

Get in on our bound volume proposition before your opportunities are gone. One entire year of the Blade, handsomely bound, for \$3.50.

The Blade hopes for its remembrances during the coming winter season in the shape of a lot of new subscribers.

While there is life there is hope, it is said, and we conclude that there's darn little chance after.

Some poet wrote, "Whatever is, is right," but we will refuse to believe it if the Blade has to go for want of patronage.

Get ready to surprise the Blade with a Christmas present by putting your tab up-to-date.

There will be a Freethought awakening in the Buckeye State before the snows of the coming winter disappear. Watch out for it.

If you can't say something good, keep still.

STRIKING A BALANCE SHEET.

(Continued from Page 4.)

lected from men who had in their time been more or less prominent, but were then dead. So the names of these dead men were ascribed as the authors of many of the books, while to other books fictitious names were attached. Among the most prominent characters of the Old Testament who were undoubtedly myths, stand Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, Moses, Aaron, Samson, Jonah, Jehovah. Samson was undoubtedly a sun-myth, as the name is derived from Shemish, or Shimshon, the sun.

The Christian System.

Christianity, its writings and heroes, are now in order.

The system of Christianity dates back to the Societies of Therapeuts and Essenes, who as monks, led an ascetic life among the hills, rocks and deserts of Africa and Asia Minor. They cultivated extreme piety and devotion to the Hebrew god, Jehovah; all things were held in common. Once a week, on the Sabbath, they met for devotional exercises, when they ate at one common table. Extreme poverty in goods and learning was their motto. Service to their god was the aim and end of life, to mete out which filth, rags, starvation and penance were resorted to. At the time assigned to Christ (a pure myth) they numbered about 4,000. A little later (about 120, common era) they met, gave up their old names and merged into one society, which they called Christ, an adjective meaning goodness, which in turn meant piety and devotion to the service of their god, Jehovah.

As ignorance has always predominated over intelligence, they rapidly increased in numbers, when Constantine, in the fourth century, put them in power over the Roman Empire. From this time on until the close of the Dark Ages, Christianity held all Christendom in its terrible grasp, blotting out all freedom of thought, intelligence, justice and humanity, and substituting in their places piety, poverty, degradation and crime. All dissenters were tortured, then put to death,—the most of them burned at the stake. During the Dark Ages, Christianity and its priesthood succeeded in slaughtering about one-fifth of the human race. (For a full description of these terrible crimes, see my numerous writings on the subject.)

New Testament Writings.

The source of the New Testament writings is now in order.

During the first century and a half after the time of the alleged Christ, all knowledge concerning the new sect rested on oral tradition. This is strictly true, notwithstanding many statements of Christians to the contrary. History maintains a

deathly silence concerning Christianity for a hundred and fifty years after the date fixed for the birth of Christ by Dionysius Exiguus. The few documents which carry earlier dates are forgeries, mostly of the third and later centuries. This early oral tradition consisted of stories borrowed from India, Persia, Africa and Scandinavia, some of which were sifted through Greek sources and in the writings ascribed to Zoroaster, which furnished a large share of it. Buddhism came to the front as an auxiliary. One hundred and fifty years later, a few of the less ignorant Christians commenced to write up their notions concerning the new sect, which was to be the successor of paganism, i. e.; the light of Christianity is but the reflection of the pagan world. It is this which accounts for the oneness of Christianity and paganism, for Christianity in all its parts and ramifications, is none other than paganism in Christian attire. During the third century there were numbers of Christians, who, as the mood struck them, attempted to reduce these oral traditions to writing, but as was then the custom with religious writers, which had come down from the Hebrews, the writers furnished neither names, dates, nor places to their writings, and this applies to every writing in both the Old and New Testaments. Many of these writings found their way into the repositories of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome, the headquarters of the three branches of the church, where they remained until carried to Nicea to be used in the construction of the canon of the New Testament. Of course, the oral tradition differed in many essential respects, and so the writings founded thereon differed accordingly, but no one could tell who were the authors, when or where written.

These writings were called "Gospels"—glad tidings. These, and not our canonical gospels as we now have them, are the gospels referred to by so many writers, especially clergymen, as belonging to the apostolic age. So anxious are our clergymen to secure evidence contemporary with the so-called apostles, and thereby render it historical, that they have ever been prone to force the opinion that these early scrap writings—gospels as they were called—are the ones which were voted into the canon by the Council of Nicea.

That Council created our four New Testament gospels, and the rest of the New Testament writings out of a vast collection of nameless, dateless and timeless writings taken from the repositories aforesaid, or Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. The collections which were taken from these repositories were extremely extensive; a few only were voted into the canon, the others were destroyed.

The Nicene Council and Its Work.

This Council was called by Constantine, the Roman Emperor, to settle the bloody

quarrels between the factions, and fix a sacred code for the guidance of the Christian world,—in short, to create a Bible for Christianity. With alacrity this call of Constantine was responded to. From every part of Christendom the Bishops and Presbyters, loaded down with anonymous gospel writings, rushed for the city of Nicea. The Council convened May 20, 325, C. E., and adjourned August 25, 381. The larger number of Bishops and writings came from the East, a lesser number from Africa, a few from Europe. These delegates were mostly monks. Only a few could read or write. They had spent their lives, like the later recluses, among the rocks, in the wilds and deserts, half naked, feeding on snakes, lizards, grass, and what they could beg.

These are the men who made the Christian New Testament. There were, says an able writer, "but two men in that convention who possessed any ability, for their discussions were of the most childish nonsense." These men were Constantine, the pagan Emperor, who became its President, and Eusebius, the historian, who, his friends say, was entirely unreliable. All others, says a writer, were a lot of illiterate creatures. As might be expected, these monks divided into factions, each attempting to force its own writings and views on the convention. So quarrelsome did they become that Constantine was forced, several times, to adjourn the body to prevent a clash of arms. In the end, a minority seeing that all was lost moved an adjournment to allow their god to settle the matter. The motion was carried by a great majority. The adjournment followed. When the Council again met, a few of the numerous writings were found on the table; all others under it. The trick was a success, and by this fraud the Christian world secured its New Testament, which thereafter, being sprinkled with inspiration, became the word of their mythical god.

This statement comes down to us mostly by tradition, but there is another tradition which says the canon is the result of a majority vote which was obtained by fraud.

The New Testament, when finished, was signed by the few who could write; all others made their "X." Two members died during the session, and their signatures being deemed essential, the document was put on their graves, where, the next morning, it was found with the signatures of these dead men.

Some years ago, I wrote and published a booklet of 32 pages, reviewing, mostly by the light of the Higher Criticism, the authorship and time, so far as known, of each and every Book, Epistle and other writing in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, both inclusive. To that book, if not out of print, I refer the reader for a fuller history

of the origin of both the Old and the New Testaments.

Prominent Men of the New Testament.

As to the men who figured in the New Testament, little can or need be said.

Jesus Christ was a pure myth, as I have shown in numerous writings. The so-called twelve apostles were made from the twelve signs of the zodiac. Of the five Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, Hermas was the only genuine one; and he did not live until the middle of the second century, when he wrote a book, mostly fiction, on Christianity, without a mention of such a man as Christ. Whether the four Evangelists were real characters is unknown. If they lived, their time was not earlier than the latter part of the second, probably not before the third century.

John, the fourth Evangelist, was probably a myth, for nothing is known of him outside of the 4th gospel which has been declared spurious.

The three synoptic gospels were first known 180 C. E., as the Records of the East, West and South, when they had no names attached to them. The fourth was still later. Theophilus, says Jerome, arranged the whole into one continuous narrative. In this condition, as one narrative, they remained without authors until the Council of Nicea (325-381), which divided them into the four gospels as we now have them, and ascribed them to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who probably were men of note of the second or third centuries, long since dead when the gospels were ascribed to them.

John Tyndal says: "We have the canon of scriptures already arranged for us; but to sift and settle these writings from the mass of spurious documents afloat was a work of vast labor. The age was rife with forgeries. Good men lent themselves to these pious frauds. . . . There were gospels and counter gospels, epistles and counter epistles, some frivolous, some dull, some speculative and romantic.*** When arguments or proofs were needed by either side, a document was discovered to meet the case, and on which the name of an apostle was boldly ascribed.*** There was no lack of manufactured testimony."

The Acts of the Apostles are supposed to be the work of the twelve. Originally, these Acts were extremely numerous, many of them having been lost. The few now in the New Testament are mere fragments of a large collection, and have been held spurious by the Higher Criticism.

Paul, the majority of the critics say, lived in the first century, but left no writings; that the fourteen Epistles ascribed to him were written in the second or third century by a school of Paulinists, using the personal pronouns "I" and "we," and telling what oral tradition said as to these epistles. These 14 were only a small part of the orig-

inal. The others were voted spurious by the Council of Nicea. Ten of these were held to be spurious by the Higher Criticism. The later critics pronounce the other four equally spurious.

With a minority of the critics, I think Paul was a myth. The little we have concerning him seems to me to be legendary.

John, whose name is ascribed to three epistles, was probably a myth, but if he lived at all it was not until the end of the second century. At any rate, the epistles have been determined to be spurious.

Peter was a myth. His writings are forgeries.

Revelation. Tradition ascribes this book to John, of the fourth gospel; but the Higher Criticism pronounces the book to be mere fiction, and its author to be unknown.

From the foregoing, it appears that every book in the Old Testament, except two at the close, of no importance, and every scrap of writing of the New Testament is spurious, so their ascribed authors are also spurious.

What a picture on which to build up a great religion!—a religion and its priesthood who, during the Dark Ages, murdered nearly one-fifth of the people of Christendom, the most of them tortured and put to death that Christianity might live!

Lying, forgeries, the most revolting tortures, savage cruelties, force, slaughter and murder mark the highway of Christianity from the time it went into power at the close of the fourth century, down to the close of the eighteenth century. The last victims were two scholars burned at the stake in Spain as late as the nineteenth.

Prof. Huxley says: "If we could see at a single view the lies, hypocrisy, the violation of every obligation, the cruelties, the slaughters, which have flowed along the line of Christianity, our imagination of hell would pale beside it." And the wolf would play the same havoc if it could free its bloody jaws from the secular arm.

Let us not forget, that millions of bleaching bones lie scattered along the pathway of the church as mementoes of the terrible power of the priesthood. If the church, its priests, or their religion, have ever performed one single act for the benefit of humanity, history has failed to record it. The lull in the line of murders and other crimes by the priesthood in the last century, is owing alone to the lack of power, not to any reforms by that pious class; but to evolution, backed by Freethought, which has forced on the world the civil powers, who have risen above the barbarities of the church and put a stop to the wanted crimes of Christianity, leaving the priests with no occupation other than such as they can get in a few heresy trials, and in repeating to their listeners the fables, legends and prevailing falsehoods of the Bible.

In the history of all the great religions of the world, we read of no persecutions, tortures or murders of unbelievers, unless Socrates be a single exception, nor was he tortured.

It was left for Christianity to torture and murder its millions for unbelief. In this, Christianity stands alone. All else which it possesses has been taken from paganism.

Here let the reader stop at the counting-house of Ethics and strike a balance sheet between Freethought and Christianity.

DAVE'S LETTER

TO HIS DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER.

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My dear heavenly father:—We found a silver dollar the other morning that some atheist had monkeyed with and cut off the "T" on "In god we trust," so it reads "In god we rust." Do you no who done it; and why didn't you strike him ded for doing it? Joe wood of struck him ded, if he had "seed him do it," but Papa woodent. Papa thinks a man shoodont bee struck ded for tellin' the truth, but only sent to the Penatentuary for monkeying with Rosevelt's lye. He says the first man that put it on the money is the 1 that ought to of been sruck ded with liting for lyeing, if anybody is. Why do you let them put a lie like that on money? Do you think it make you feal any better to have it on? I shoood think it would worry you when you no it is not so. It would worry Papa to deth. Joe nose it is not so, but he says everybody ought to trust you, whether they do or not, and if you want to strike 'em ded for not trusting you, that you have a wright to, for you made them. Did you make Bob Bardett? Why don't you strike him ded when he tries to be phunny? Their are lots of people hear that wood if they were you. Did yo strike Annanyass ded for telling a lye or for telling the truth? Why didn't you strike the devil ded for telling Eve the truth? Can't you kill him? Can't you kill Roseveldt either? Did you strike my Papa with Locomotar Ataxa? Can't you kill him? He don't think you can, but Joe does, and Joe says you will if he don't look out.

As ever, DAVE.

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